What did the Quadrupeds Know And When Did They Know It: The Education Of A Byzantine Bestiarist

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1. ***Entertaining Tale of Quadrupeds***

- Late mediaeval vernacular Greek work
- Anonymous (like most works of its kind not written under Western dominion)
  Prologue contains acrostic *ΔΙΟΓΕΝΟΥΣ* 'Diogenes'—which may be spurious.
- Internally dated to 15 September 1364 (not 1365!), though date could be conventional.

  Τῷ ἑξάκις χιλιοστῷ ὀκτακοσιοστῷ τε
  καὶ πρὸς τὰ ἑβδομήκοντα καὶ ἄλλῳ τρίτῳ ἔτει,
  μηνὸς τοῦ Σεπτεμβρίου τε τῆς πέντε καὶ δεκάτης
  ὁμοῦ πάντα συνήχθησαν τὰ τετράποδα ζῷα
  It was in 6873,
  and on the fifteenth of the month September,
  that all the animals did make assembly (Tale 11–14*)*

- Five manuscripts: 1461–1625
- Three modern editions (Wagner 1874, Tsiouni 1972, Papathomopoulos 2002), translated into Russian (Šandrovskaja 1956), English (Nicholas & Baloglou 2003)

Animal convention: King Lion convenes conference to have all animals

> *trade witty words, and come to see*
> *the merit and the faults of each apart.* (65–66)

Animals enumerate their virtues and each other's faults, escalating from rat to elephant.
Elephant is derided by Monkey, whereupon Lion breaks truce, declares war between carnivores and herbivores.
Seldom noted: the herbivores win.

Tale directly related to *Book of Birds* (*Πουλολόγος*) (Tsavare 1987): slightly earlier, wild vs. domestic birds.
Different tenor: much more symmetrical and polished, but cryptic.
Eagle has only to threaten force, and birds comply. (In one redaction, influenced by *Tale*, birds revolt.)

Much speculation on whether hidden message concealed.
Book of Birds encourages this: anthropomorphism, stories, allusions.
Tale may have something programmatically (diplomatic negotiations; herbivores win), but not in its plot.
Animals mostly speak as farm produce.
Tale thus very valuable for information on daily life in Byzantium; that's mostly why *Tale* has been read.

2. Bestiaries

More distantly, *Tale* related to bestiaries:
moralising compendia of animal lore, always with ulterior Christian allegory.
Widely diffused in West; in Byzantium represented by their antecedent, the *Physiologus* (Sbordone 1936).
Physiologus composed 2nd century, Alexandria; reproduces many Egyptian & Greek magical notions.
Primary source for mediaeval notions about animals—even when the Ancients actually knew better:

Elephants:

> For they do not sleep by lying on the earth, but they recline against the thickest and largest trees, so the two legs closest to the trunk hold it up gently against the ground, while the one side, taking up the weight of the entire body, is supported by the tree. (Agatharchides 55)

> The elephant does not behave as some used to allege, but settles down and bends its legs … Its hind legs it bends just as a human being does. (Aristotle *Historia Animalium* 498a)

> And the nature of the elephant is as follows: if he falls down, he cannot rise up again; for he has no joints in its knees [as do other beasts]. (*Physiologus* I 43)

> *His seat-mate was the mighty elephant,*
> *a beast with neither joints, nor knees, nor ankles;* (*Tale* 19–20)

> Ulysses: *The elephant hath joints, but none for courtesy; his legs are legs for necessity, not for flexure*. (Shakespeare, *Troilus and Cressida* II.3)

3. What did the bestiarist learn in school?

Eponymous Byzantinist authors won't shut up about their erudition: riddled with classical allusions (& hypercorrections.)

Prima facie, if authors wrote in vernacular, must have been unlearned.

This is no longer believed; Hans-Georg Beck and researchers on the Byzantine romances have established authors in vernacular could be familiar with conventions of learned literature (rhetoric).

And all mediaeval 'vernacular' text displays learned influence: inevitable, since everyone literate was by definition literate in formal Greek.

True 'from below' literature associated with breakdown of Byzantine education system: *Chronicle of Morea*.

But there was humbler level of learning: e.g. Alexius Makrembolites, *Dialogue of Rich and Poor*.

Or translators of Homeric works: no reason to think the translator of the *War of Troy* from Old French had ever heard of Homer; Constantine Hermoniacus looked at Homer halfway through his rendering of the Iliad (worst poem of Greek ever), but gave up and went back to Constantine Manasses.

Does *Tale* fit into this level of education? What does it say about the Late Byzantines *low* intelligentsia?

Three linguistic levels to Greek: **vernacular**, **Atticist** (Classical Greek plus Homer plus fertile imagination), and **Koine** (language of Roman state and New Testament)

By Greek Dark Ages (800 AD), Koine already had to be learned in school as language distinct from vernacular.

Alongside high literature in Atticist Greek, some 'humbler' literature in Koine for popular reading (inasmuch as people read):

- *Physiologus*; *Aesop* and *Life of Aesop*; *Alexander Romance*; Bible (New Testament, Septuagint)

Byzantine educational system: started with Psalms.

Some wouldn't have gotten far past Psalms.

Corpus of Byzantine dictionaries, translating Atticist words into Koine; also scholia, commentaries on Classical works, explaining terms in simpler Greek (and occasionally, holding their nose, using vernacular terms)—evidence of what a Byzantine at school could be expected to know.

Particularly in Dark Ages, little access to Classical works in their original form: people used compendia (*epitomes*) abbreviating Classical learning.

Zoology: Classical sources, scientific (Aristotle; Aristophanes of Byzantium, 3rd c. BC) or not (Aelian, 2nd c. AD) unknown.

What we have are epitomes, e.g. abridgement of Timothy of Gaza (6th c. AD);

Constantine Porphyrogennitus' (10th c. AD) epitome of Aristophanes of Byzantium, meshing him with Timothy of Gaza. Not well edited: Porphyrogennitus cites both Aristophanes (elephants have knees) and Timothy (elephants don't have knees.)

So we can ask what sort of Greek the author learned (how far did he get in his studies of formal Greek); and what he knew of zoology—from what sources.

4. Language

Like all mediaeval vernacular Greek texts, *Tale* is macaronic.

> Ἀκμὴν καὶ τὸ ποδάριν μου, τὸ εὐτελές μου μέλος,
> κἀκεῖνον χρείαν ἐκτελεῖ καὶ αὐτὴν τιμημένην.
> *Even my foot, a limb of slight renown,*
> *will also serve a purpose well-esteemed:* (*Tale* 310–311)

But author uses language to effect: animals more colloquial, narrator more formal:

> Ἡλίου βασιλεύοντος ὁ πόλεμος ἐπαύθη
> καὶ ἡ σκοτία τῆς νυκτὸς ἔσωσεν τούτους ἔξω.
> *Finally, as the sun crowned the horizon,*
> *the war came to an end. And then the night*
> *preserved them all away within its darkness.* (*Tale* 1075–1076)

> Δυόδοντε, κακόδοντε, σαλέ, σπιθαμογένη
> καὶ μεγαλάπτη, γαμησᾶ καὶ κλαδοτρυπολόγε,
> τ' ἀπτία σου καὶ ὁ κῶλος σου πάντα τζιμπούρια γέμουν.
> *You two-toothed, crook-toothed loon with foot-long whiskers!*
> *You big-eared hornball sneaking round in branches!*
> *Your ear and arse are always full of ticks.* (*Tale* 326–328)

Author knows genitive absolutive, dative, archaic discourse particles (γάρ)—but these are characteristic of Koine officialese as well as Classical Greek.

Where did author's vocabulary come from?

One Homeric instance:

> Οὕτως γὰρ ἑρμηνεύεται ἡ σὴ ἐπωνυμία:
> Πτὼξ γραφικῶς ὁ λαγώς, ὡς πτήσσω τὸ φοβοῦμαι.
> *So that explains the name you've come to have:*
> ptōx. Literary. *Hare. From* ptēssō *'fear'.*

> ὅν τε καὶ ὑψόθ' ἐόντα πόδας ταχὺς οὐκ ἔλαθε πτὼξ
> θάμνῳ ὑπ' ἀμφικόμῳ κατακείμενος
> *of whom [the eagle], though he be on high, the swift-footed hare is not unseen as he croucheth*
> *beneath a leafy bush* (*Iliad* 17.676)

But clearly from way the word is given, the author has looked this up in a dictionary. Dictionary probably also behind etymologising of 'dog':

> «Τί ἔναι, σκύλε, τὸ λαλεῖς, τί ἓν τὸ τζαμπουνίζεις;
> Σκύλον σὲ λέγουν ὄνομα, ἀληθῶς σκύλος εἶσαι·
> κατὰ γὰρ τὸ σὸν ὄνομα ἔχεις τὴν πολιτείαν.»
> *"Hey, dog, what are you crapping on about?*
> *You're dog by name, and truly dog by nature—*
> *because your name and conduct go together."* (*Tale* 199–201)

σκύλος cf. σκύλον 'arms stripped off a slain enemy' / σκυλεύω 'to loot, to plunder', σκύλος 'pelt', or σκύλλω 'mangle':

> ἐκείνους ὁποὺ **ἐσκύλευσεν** ὁ μέγας Βελισάρις
> καὶ ἐφάνηκεν ἀπάνω τους ὡσὰν **σκύλος** λυσσάρης
> *Those whom the great Belisarius* ***looted***
> *and acted towards like a rabid* ***dog***. (*Belisariad* ρ 483–484)

Most learned words are Koine, and turn up in humble reading material in Koine:

- ἄγρα 'fishing': Homeric ('hunting'), Classical (Sophocles)—
  but also New Testament (Luke 5:4), Aesop (Fable 13, 21)
- εὐωχία 'good cheer, feast': Aristophanes;
  problematic for work's copyists, most of whom turned it into ἡσυχία 'quiet';
  Byzantine dictionaries gloss it—but also use it as a gloss;
  turns up in Septuagint (Greek interpolations to *Esther*), Aesop (Fable 47, 80)
- ὑπεραίρομαι: used not in classical meaning 'to excel',
  but Koine meaning 'to exalt oneself' (II Corinthians 12:7)
- κάθαρμα: strong invective in Ancient Greek (Demosthenes), whence reimported into Modern Greek.
  So used in learned Byzantine Greek:
  πτῶμά τι καὶ μορμολύκειον ὄντα καὶ **κάθαρμα** "for he is a calamity and a bugbear and a ***rascal***" (John Tzetzes)
  ἵνα μηδεὶς Ἑλλήνων κἂν πάλαι τεθνηκὼς ᾖ τὴν τῶν **καθαρμάτων** τούτων ὕβριν ἐκφύγῃ "so that there may be none even of the dead Ancient Greeks of yore to escape insult from these ***scum***" (Demetrius Cydones)

  But *Tale* doesn't use it that strongly:
  καὶ εἶσαι κάθαρμα, πομπὴ καὶ γέλοιον τῶν ζῴων.
  No, you become an outcast then, a freak,
  a laughing-stock for all the animals. (681)
  Ξυλόποδε, παράσημε καὶ κάθαρμα τῶν ζῴων
  You deformed and wooden-legged
  disaster in the realm of animals! (942)

  cf. *Life of Aesop*: Ἵνα τί, ὦ Ζηνᾶ, τῆς ὁδοῦ πεπλάνηκάς με ἕνεκεν τοῦ **καθάρματος** τούτου;
  Zenas, why did you take me out of my way on account of this **κάθαρμα***?*
  I Corinthians 4:13: ὡς **περικαθάρματα τοῦ κόσμου** ἐγενήθημεν, πάντων περίψημα, ἕως ἄρτι
  we are made as ***the filth of the world****, and are the offscouring of all things unto this day*
- Three potential exceptions, words which look Classical:
  ἀγχίνοια 'sagacity'
  absent in Bible and glossed in Byzantine dictionaries, but present in Aesop (Fables 39b) and some redactions of the Alexander Romance
  νέμω 'share out'
  archaic meaning, which did not survive into Koine ('graze, dwell' used in Septuagint, Aesop), glossed in Byzantine dictionaries.
  But appears in prologue of *Tale*, whose authenticity is doubtful (acrostic);
  and attested in Church hymns (whose language was more archaic than the Bible's):
  Pentecost hymn Πνοῇ βιαίᾳ γλωσσοπυρσεύτως **νέμει** Χριστὸς τὸ θεῖον Πνεῦμα τοῖς Ἀποστόλοις *With a violent breath Christ* ***shares out*** *the Holy Spirit in tongues of fire to the Apostles.*
  καρυκεία 'casserole'
  Classical reference to Lydian sauce made of blood and spices. No contemporary mention after 7th c. AD (though anachronistically persisted in erudite writing), glossed by dictionaries and scholiasts.
  καρυκεία is the *lectio difficilior*—but on this occasion that is no guarantee of authenticity:
  other mss. have μαγειρείαν 'cookery', ordinary word, and a scribe may have simply been eager to show off writing.
- Single instance of citing a work: the first work the author would have seen at school:
  Καὶ ἐπληρώθη τὸ ῥηθὲν διὰ τοῦ ὑμνογράφου:
  «Ὁ βασιλεὺς οὐ σῴζεται ἐν πολλῇ τῇ δυνάμει
  καὶ γίγας οὐ σωθήσεται ἐν πλήθει τῆς ἰσχύος.»
  Thereby the Psalmist's words became fulfilled:

"There is no king saved by the multitude
of any host; nor is a mighty man
delivered by much strength." (*Tale* 1077–1078)

οὐ σῴζεται βασιλεὺς διὰ πολλὴν δύναμιν, καὶ γίγας οὐ σωθήσεται ἐν πλήθει ἰσχύος αὐτοῦ
There is no king saved by the multitude of an host: a mighty man is not delivered by much strength (Psalms 33:16)

- Two more literary allusions—to the second work he would have seen: Aesop

the camel who once begged of Zeus the god
to give her horns appropriate in size,
which she deserved like any other beast;
whereby, without delay, he gave the order
that she be dock-eared. So they cut her ears,
as well as granting her a hunch to bear,
making her now an outcast and a joke
and no more than a freak among the beasts." (*Tale* 771–775)

A camel, seeing a bull proud to have horns, grew jealous and wished to gain as much. So she went to Zeus and begged him to grant her horns. And Zeus, fed up with her (for she was not satisfied with the size of her body and her strength, but wanted ever more), not only did not put horns on her, but took off part of her ears. Thus many looking on others with envy end up losing even what they have. (Aesop, *Fables* 119)

Once some load-bearing donkeys, because they continuously bore loads and were vexed, sent envoys to Zeus seeking some relief to their pains. And wishing to show to them that this was impossible, he told them that they would be rid of their misfortune only when they made a river by urinating. And they believed him to have told the truth; so from then on to this day, wherever they see each other's urine, they stand there and urinate too.

The myth means that each person's fate is inescapable. (Aesop, *Fables* 196)

It's said you donkeys made a resolution,
electing one of you you held as prudent,
and sent him all the way up to the king, […]
And since that time, and since that very day,
right up to now, and for all time henceforth,
you donkeys keep on looking for that mandate,
and anywhere you piss, you stoop and sniff,
but haven't found it yet; nor will you ever. (*Tale* 691–737)

Even here, confusion: *Tale*'s donkey has *swallowed* the mandate, and the fable is probably conflated with a story surviving in Cyprus:

"I was so happy, and braying so hard, that I swallowed it. Now that I'm going to have a shit, let's sniff and look through my dung, in case we find it there." And from then on, donkeys have been looking for the paper, and sniffing both their own dung and each other's. (Hioutas 1978:60–61)

So author of *Tale* had bare basics of education (knew what a dictionary was, had read the Bible and Aesop); no real reason to posit any more than that. Conclusion borne out even more strongly by his command of zoology.

5. Zoology

Author makes a point of not straying too far from the farmyard.
When dealing with farmyard animals, everything he says is commonplace—mostly instrumentalist.
(Cf. *Physiologus* speculating on weasels conceiving through their mouths and giving birth through their ears.)

No fantastical animals (again cf. *Physiologus*—originator of notions of unicorn and dragon—or *Book of Birds*, many of whose birds are probably imaginary)

Very few exotic animals, bunched at end of poem: lion, leopard, 'pard' (cheetah), elephant, monkey.

- Leopard he avoids saying anything about at all.
  Just as well: the λεοντόπαρδος probably didn't exist as a feline distinct from the pard (Nicholas 1999).
  Not much more on pard; knows about leopard-skin couches, but does not even know of cheetahs used to hunt (unlike illustrator, who portrays pard as cheetah with collar).
  Leopard calls pard παρδαλέ 'spotty' (!), and short-tailed (884); author may have confused cheetah with lynx.

What little he says about them is mostly drawn from *Physiologus*:

- Lion
  ἀγριόφθαλμος 'fierce-eyed', γαγκλαδοραδάτος 'twisting-tailed' (*Tale* 18)
  The first nature of the lion is the following: when he walks in the mountains and the smell of the hunters comes to him, he covers his tracks with his tail, so that the hunters do not follow his tracks to find his den and capture him. (*Physiologus* I 1)
  The second nature of the lion: When the lion sleeps in the cave, his eyes are awake; for they are open. And in the Song of Songs Solomon witnesses: "I sleep, but my hearth waketh" (Song of Songs 5:2). (*Physiologus* I 1)
  Most mss of *Physiologus*: ἀγρυπνοῦσιν 'keep awake'; One ms.: ἀγριαίνουσιν 'grow wild'
- Monkey
  The mimic monkey, mockery of the world (37)
  "most mimicking and most cunning, and whatever it sees Man doing, it does the same" (Sbordone 1936:318)
  You louse-munching nit-nibbling disgusting dirt-face (972)
  Not mentioned in Physiologus; author could easily have seen monkeys—being imported into Cyprus from 'Saracenia' in 13th c.
- Elephant 1: unbending legs (see above)
  unknown in Byzantium outside old pictures (e.g. *Kamara* arch in Thessalonica)
  No elephant seen in Constantinople after that brought by Constantine Monomachus in 1040s–50s: "the elephant, who was a marvel as he passed by to the citizens of Constantinople and the other Romans, for whom his image had long faded from memory" (Attaleiates)
  Western Europe: 500–1450, elephants seen only in 797, 1228, 1254.
- Elephant 2: trapped by tree (950–957)
  And when you're drowsy and you fall asleep,
  then woe betide you, O ill-fated beast:
  you're twisted round, and fall right on your back,
  turned upside down, your legs up in the air,
  just like so many wood-boards! When that happens,
  you are in no position to get up.
  And then the men who hunt you down arrive;
  they find you, and they kill you and destroy you,
  since, weak and helpless, you can't do a thing.
  If he would sleep, he reclines himself against a tree and falls asleep. So the hunters, knowing the nature of the elephant, go and saw the tree close to falling. The elephant thus goes to lie back, and falls down together with the tree, and he starts to cry out and weep. (*Physiologus* I 43)
- Elephant 3: used in battle (906–913)
  "Just like a tower [τοῖχος/πύργος], safe and fortified,
  a fort impregnable, firm to the end,
  thus too stand I, robust beyond compare.
  Thus bastions [κάστρη] are built on me, made of boards,

and solid towers made of wood, as well,
*soundly fortified [*κατωχυρωμένους*]. Soldiers in these towers*
stand resolute, fiercely combat their foes,
and overpower and defeat them all.
Alexander Romance ε
ἐπὶ τούτοις ἄφνω ἐλέφαντες ἐμφαίνονται τῇ Ἰνδῶν παρατάξει ξύλινα **τείχη** ἐπιφερόμενοι, καὶ ἐπ᾽ αὐτῶν ἄνδρες ἔνοπλοι ἦσαν [Κγ: ἵσταντο] λίθους καὶ δόρατα ταῖς χερσὶν ἔχοντες. ὡς δὲ ταῦτα ἐθεάσαντο Μακεδόνες ἀπέκαμον καὶ τῇ προγονικῇ περιπίπτουσι δειλανδρίᾳ. […] Καὶ δὴ ἡμέρας καταλαβούσης τὸ Ἰνδικὸν εἰς μάχην ἐξῆει στρατόπεδον. ἐλέφαντας δὲ, ὡς προεῖπον, ἐπιβεβηκότες δίκην περιπατοῦσαι πόλεις ἐφαίνοντο **τοῖς τείχεσι κατωχυρωμέναι.**
Then suddenly elephants emerged in the Indian army bearing wooden ***fortifications***; and on these there were [*manuscript K and recension γ:* there stood] armed men, with spears and stones in their hands. When the Macedonians saw this they flinched, and they fell into their ancestral cowardice. […] And when day came the Indian camp went to war; riding on elephants, as I said above, they appeared like walking cities, ***with fortified walls***. (*Alexander Romance* ε 36.4, 6)
κελεύει δὲ τοῖς ὁπλίταις ποιῆσαι τοῦτο· ὁπόταν πλησίον γένωνται ἐλεφάντων, κατεχόμενα ἔμπροσθεν ἀκοντίσαι σμικρότατα χοίρων βρέφη μεγάλα γρυλίζοντα. ὡς οὖν ἐλέφαντες εἶδον, εὐθέως ἄνω καὶ κάτω ἐκτιναγέντες τὰ **καστρίδια** ἔρριψαν καὶ ἀνυποστρεπτὶ φεύγουσιν.
He ordered his infantry to do the following: whenever they got near the elephants, they should prod forwards small piglets, which would squeal loudly. When the elephants saw them, they immediately tossed themselves up and down, casting down the ***forts***, and fled without turning back. (*Alexander Romance* ε 36.6)

- Elephant 4: what trunks are for
Tale correctly realises that
your mouth is one place and your trunk is elsewhere;
you pick your food up here, and move it there
to eat it. (940–942)
(*Tale* knows more about trunks than the illustrator of manuscript C: that's an aardvark, not an elephant!)
The *Physiologus* is vague (first redaction silent; second redaction: *For the elephant is a large beast, having a trunk such that he can destroy any beast.* [*Likewise its food and drink are handled by its trunk.*]—misinterpreted by e.g. Basil of Caesarea (the Greek Santa Claus): "and it has a trunk, which acts as its throat, through which it brings in food and draws up drink.")
Given paucity of elephants, do we posit that author read Aristotle? ("Its nose, however, is of such a kind and of such a size that it can be used instead of hands: its method of eating and drinking is to reach with this organ into its mouth")
Not necessarily: the 11th century abridgement of Timothy of Gaza says "that it has a trunk with which it does everything as with a hand." And author may have worked things out from available mosaics & statues.

Tale also mentions notion that deer suck down snakes (52), and that burning their horn repels snakes. The former is Physiologan:

The Physiologus has said this, too: a deer, wherever it meets a snake, swallows it, and runs off, driven urgently. And as it is driven to run, not standing still for two or three days, the snake is digested by it. When the beast is digested, the deer urinates it out through its urethra; and wherever that urine falls, the purest musk is generated.
Thus too you, O intelligent man, after much effort and a long race, will be able to be rid of the stench of the devil. (*Physiologus* I 30 bis)

The latter is attributed in the *Physiologus* not to the deer (save in one ms.), but to the elephant.
The *Physiologus*' sources do attribute it to the deer (Aelian IX 20, Basil of Caesarea, Timothy of Gaza); appears to

be phonetic confusion (ἔλαφος 'deer' ~ ἐλέφας 'elephant').

Did he read Timothy? Unnecessary to postulate: both notions survive in Modern Greek folklore:

> Ἔτσι λένε πὼς τὸ ἐλάφι καὶ τὸ γάμο του ἂν κάμη, δὲ γκαστρώνεται, ἂν μὴ πρῶτα βρῆ καὶ φάη φίδι. Κι αὐτὸς εἶναι ὁ λόγος ποὺ τὰ λάφια κυνηγᾶνε τὰ φίδια· ὅπου κι ἂν τὰ βροῦνε, ὅπου κι ἂν τὰ συντύχουν, χυμοῦν γιὰ νὰ τὰ φᾶνε.
>
> Μὰ καὶ τὰ φίδια ξέρουν τί τὰ περιμένει, γι' αὐτὸ καὶ σὰν ἰδοῦν ἐλάφι, τὸ κόβουν λάσπη. Φεύγουν κι ὅλο φεύγουν, σαράντα ράχες μπορεῖ νὰ προσδιαβοῦν στὸ φευγιό τους, καὶ πάλι νὰ μὴ σταθοῦνε.
>
> Τὰ φίδια τὰ φοβοῦνται τὰ λάφια, γι' αὐτὸ καὶ τὸ ἐλαφοκέρατο εἶναι σκιάχτρο τους. Ἔτυχε νάχης, πάνω σου ἐλαφοκέρατο, ξῦσε λιγάκι μὲ ἕνα κοφτερὸ μαχαίρι νὰ πέσουν ξέσματα στὴ φωτιά, καὶ φίδι γιὰ φίδι δὲ μένει πουθενά· ἀπὸ τὴ μυρουδιά τους ξολοθρεύονται.
>
> So they say that even after her wedding, the deer will not fall pregnant unless she first finds and eats a snake. And that is the reason why deer hunt snakes; wherever they find them, wherever they meet them, they rush to eat them.
>
> But snakes, too, know what awaits them; so they are off like a shot the instant they see a deer. They just flee and flee; they may go past forty mountain ridges on their way, without stopping.
>
> Snakes do fear deer; that's why deer horn is a talisman against them. If you happen to have some deer horn on you, scrape a bit with a sharp knife so the shavings fall in the fire, and there will not be a trace of a snake left; they are exterminated by the smell alone. (Loukopoulos 1940:51–52)

Author dipped into written sources, but outside where it is absolutely necessary (elephants, stories he already knew through Aesop), use of written sources superficial.

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